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Biography of Peter Abelard

Peter Abelard, also known as Pierre Du Pallet was a French medieval philosopher during the 12th century. He was born 1079 in Pallets. He died during the year of 1142. He was born the oldest of a minor Breton noble family. Growing up he studied logic based on Aristotelian. In the medieval period, it was called scholasticism (Abelard,1).

Rocelin of Compiegne was his professor. He was famous for his argument and opposition against realism. He was also known for teaching nominalism. Nominalism is defined as the “view that only individuals are real, i.e. exist independently of a mind, and that words cannot refer to something real unless they refer to an individual” (Mautner,428). Abelard was also taught by William of Champeaux. He followed realism. Later, Abelard was famous for his arguments against realism; and following nominalism.

He went on to create his own argument called Conceptualism. Conceptualism is “the attempt to bridge the gap between Realism and Nominalism” (Abelard,2). It was the concept that stated that the Universals existed solely in the mind and had no external reality. Universals were defined as common features that had relationships with particulars; also known as individual physical objects. Abelard was best known for his work “Sic Et Non” which means yes or no. In this work, he argued the opinions and beliefs of the Church Fathers on theology were all contradictions. In this piece, he used their words to compare and show their contradictions. He tried to give clarity on their ideas and beliefs of the Christian form of theology. He argued that “dialectic was the road to the truth as well as a good mental exercise “(Abelard,2). Through words a common understanding of Christian beliefs could be made.

He later went on and wrote a book about his nominalist views on the Trinity. This book was called *Theologia*. It outlined the idea of three persons of the Trinity, father, son, and holy spirit. This led to controversy among all philosophers and Christian believers. In 1141, he was commanded by the council of Sens to no longer write, speak or preach of his idea of theology. They burned all of his work to instill that his work would no longer be spread or followed. Abelard died a year later on April 21, 1142.

**Citations:**

* Mautner, Thomas, ed. The Dictionary of Philosophy. 2nd ed. St. Ives: Penguin Group, 2005. Print.
* “Peter Abelard by Individual Philosopher.” *Peter Abelard by Individual Philosopher Philosophy.* Philosophy Basics, n.d. Web. 27 Nov.2016.